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Introductory lecture, delivered at the o



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INTRODUCTORY
LECTURE,
DELIVERED AT THE
OPENING
OF THE

New York College of Veterinary Surgeons,

NOVEMBER 6, 1865.

BY PROF. A. S. COPEMAN.

NEW YORK:
M. T. TYLER, PRINTER, No. 22 SPRUCE STREET.

1865.

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OPENING

OF THE

NEW YORK COLLEGE OF VETERINARY SURGEONS.

Monday evening, November 6th, Professor Copeman delivered the Introductory Lecture at that Institution to a large and highly intellectual audience. It will be observed, on reading the Lecture, that the Professor addressed himself more particularly to students and gentlemen who desired to qualify themselves as veterinary practitioners.

The subject was handled with marked ability, clearly showing how essential veterinary science was to the public health, to the agricultural interests, and to the army. The remarks upon organizing our Boards of Health are particularly apropos at the present time, and well deserving the serious consideration of our Legislative bodies.

At the conclusion of the Address, the President of the Faculty announced the order of the Lectures, and in behalf of the Trustees, invited the ladies and gentlemen to adjourn to the Trustees' room, to join with them in wishing success to this new and important enterprise, where the remaining hours were socially and pleasantly passed, the Trustees leaving nothing undone that could add to the enjoyment of the evening.

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LECTURE.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:—In opening the proceedings of the New York College of Veterinary Surgeons in this, the first year of its existence, I can not but feel the painful disproportion between the vastness and importance of the objects contemplated in its formation, and my power to do them justice.

Yet the obvious merits of our cause set aside all personal considerations. I shall, therefore, on this occasion, confide rather on the innate greatness and strength of the theme than in my own feeble advocacy. Permit me then, gentlemen, to ask your forbearance, your courtesy and kindness.

On occasions like the present, custom has wisely ordained that the chief objects of the lecture shall be to bring before the students an outline of their studies, show them the facilities which exist for the acquirement of information, and offer them some words of advice and friendly counsel, to incite them to pursue the right course in order that they may attain an honorable position in their chosen profession.

Students of the New York College of Veterinary Surgeons, I greet you. Some of you are here in New York for the first time, and perhaps also this is the first time you have been left alone and uncontrolled to seek amusements and companions. You are about to begin a new life—aye, and at the beginning of a new school.

Life is a succession of beginnings. We are always beginning something—years, months, weeks, days, the seasons of the year, our plans and schemes, the very functions of our bodies—something or other we are always beginning. It is an old proverb—“Well begun is half done,” and is about as true as any current saying in existence.

The beginning of our physical life is the day of our birth, the beginning of our professional life is the practical commencement of our professional studies. Such this day is to the first students of the New York College of Veterinary Surgeons.

As a profession, we must be content to follow in the wake of human medicine. “Ars veterinaria post medicinum secunda est,” was the remark of Vegetius. This ancient physician was deeply impressed with the importance of the art, and strenuously labored for its advancement. Shall it be said that we are less ardent in the cause of science, and less diligent in the use of means to elevate the veterinary profession than was Vegetius, who lived fifteen centuries ago? Surely not, but rather let us give proof to the world, that if our art in its practical utility stands second to human medicine, yet as an abstract science, it is fully equal, and as such, deserves a like support.

Knowing, as I do, that veterinary science requires, nay, demands, of its votaries earnest industry, active energies and cheerful zeal, I feel that I cannot do better than address to you a few words of exhortation, encouragement and advice. Gentlemen, you must prepare yourselves for much severe mental labor, and many disagreeable duties. If, however, this profession is your choice, a choice resulting from thought and sincere conviction, then put your shoulder to the wheel, determined neither to look back nor be faint hearted, but hopefully to wrestle with every difficulty, and manfully combat every obstacle.

In the choice of a profession, young men are doubtless influenced by different motives, some being led by idleness to select that requiring the least exertion. Some by ambition to adopt that most conducive to popularity and fame. Some by avarice to prefer that offering the greatest amount of

émolument. Others again are guided by their having a certain aptitude for peculiar researches and pursuits.

We trust that the majority of the gentlemen, who are now about to commence the study of veterinary medicine, belong to the latter class. We call upon you in the first place to take a clear and definite view of the avocations and duties you are now entering upon as novitiates in studying the mysteries of life. We call upon you to reflect not only upon the responsibilities, but particularly upon those duties, which, day by day will increase in weight and significance around you on account of the peculiar position for which you are preparing, and into which you will soon be thrown. About the nature of this position there can be little doubt, but paramount beyond all will be demanded from it prudence, judgment and a full recognition of the fact that the preservation of health, the prevention and cure of disease, are the essential objects of your future life.

Gentlemen—commence your studies with a firm determination to do your best, patiently and honestly, for you must recollect that the present is the most important period of your life. Recollect you have not come to this institution for pleasure, but for gaining a knowledge of a difficult profession. Be zealous and unremitting, and not work by fits and starts. Let perseverance be your morning light, and courage your evening star. "If," says one of the most accomplished writers of the day, "you entertain the supposition that any real success—in great things or in small—ever was or could be, ever can or will be wrested from fortune by fits and starts, leave that wrong idea here." And now, gentlemen, although I hope to impress upon your minds the importance of perseverance in your studies, I by no means wish to urge you on to impossibilities. The average of men are gifted merely with very moderate powers. Talent, in the strict sense of the word, belongs to very few. It is diligence and mostly patience, that twin brother of genius; it is hard study, courage and steady labor; these are the qualities which raise so many men to honorable positions.

Remember it is seldom that he who has neglected the struggle in his youth, has the opportunity afforded him to redeem lost time. The moralist has told us, "If the spring put forth no blossoms, in summer there will be no beauty, and in autumn no fruit; so if youth be trifled away without improvement, manhood will be contemptible, and old age miserable."

He who brings to the study of his profession the spirit of independent inquiry, of industry that will not be daunted, and the inestimable quality of self-reliance, will not fail to discover in this school ample means of instruction. But he who does not feel within him the impulse to learn the necessity to work, who waits to be taught, to have a contracted-for amount of anatomy, physiology, medicine and surgery served out to him, and packed up for him as a patient mule waits for a load to be laid upon his back, will not find it here, nor in any other college. Knowledge is for him that seeks it.

Now as medical knowledge is devoted to the restoration of animal health, when impaired by disease or injury, it will be at once manifest that the study of animal organization in a condition of health is essential to the comprehension of the changes which occur as the result of disease. Let us now briefly examine the manner in which it is proposed to accomplish this object.

The Professor of Anatomy will show you how the various tissues of the organized body combine to form the several organs; he will exhibit to you bones, cartilages, tendons, muscles, blood vessels and nerves, in short, he will demonstrate to you each part, each organ, and each fibre in the horse, one of the most complicated and most powerful machines ever created. The student must remember that his success or non-success mainly depend upon himself. He may be aided by the instructions of others, but his real position must be made by his own exertions. It is in the dissecting room and in the hospital where alone the future practitioner can fit himself for his duties. His dissections must be his own; the lecture, the demonstration, may assist him materially. But to know anatomy practically, and as a surgeon, per-

sonal experience is essential. Indeed it is in the dissecting room that the surgeon must educate his hand.

The Professor of Physiology will teach how this wonderful creation is developed, sustained and nourished; its fundamental properties, the phenomena it presents, and the laws which govern its actions.

The Science of Physiology must become the study of your whole life; every practitioner of medicine is necessarily a physiologist; that is, one who reasons and discourses upon the phenomena of nature. The ultimate source of our knowledge of nature and her laws is experience, by which is meant not the experience of one man only, or of one generation, but the accumulated experience of all mankind in all ages, registered in books or recorded in traditions. There are, gentlemen, I believe, few subjects so conducive to the pleasure and happiness of life as the study of nature and her laws, and this is the constant pursuit of the physiologist.

The Professor of Theory and Practice will explain to you the symptoms of the different diseases, and the mode of interrogating nature for their detection. He will teach you that in the management of disease the first step is to have the cause, seat, nature and natural termination. If possible to remove the cause, and place the patient in the most favorable condition as to air, food, and drink. Having done this, the next question is whether nature can be further aided in her efforts of restoration. There may be irritating matters in the digestive organs that require to be expelled, or there may be some condition of the system requiring to be changed by medical agents.

Do not, however, indulge the supposition too often entertained by the illiterate, that there is a specific virtue in medicinal agents rendering them antagonistic of disease. The veterinarian can no more cure disease than the farmer can make his grain or grass grow; all that he can do is to place his patient in the most favorable conditions for recovery, trusting to the laws of nature for the result—often medicinal agents may be unnecessary, but if given, the indication should be clear and the effect expected to be produced well understood.

The Professor of Materia Medica and Therapeutics will furnish every facility for the requisition of a thorough knowledge of the various articles used in the practice of veterinary medicine—and he will teach all modern improvements and discoveries. He will also give instruction in regard to the abuse as well as the use of medicines, and thus forewarn the students of errors which he should avoid. The preparation and modes of administration of the various drugs, their composition, their physiological and therapeutic effects will all be comprehended in the course of instruction in Materia Medica.

The Professor of Surgery will instruct you in the art of performing the various operations which may become necessary to save life or remove disease. As the most skillful artificer is he who neglects none of the minutiae appertaining to his calling, so the most successful practitioner is that one who makes himself acquainted most completely with every symptom and every change which may present itself. It is therefore in diligent attention in the stalls of the hospitals that the practitioner must rely for future success.

While much information may be procured from lectures, and the attentive perusal of works of acknowledged merit, it is only at the side of the sick in the hospitals that the student can form acquaintance with the features of disease, can trace its progress through its various phases, and ascertain with precision the influence of remedial agents, in checking or controlling its symptoms. It will be your privilege and duty to daily visit the sick animals in the hospital; here, and here only can you learn to distinguish the differences of the crepitant and mucous rales in diseases of the lungs, the difference between lymphangitis and scarlatina; to note the pulse of enteritic inflammation or of profuse hemorrhage. In the hospital, you must also learn the visible and open manifestations of disease, view the haggard countenance, the furred tongue, and hear the stertorous breathing. It is there that you

must study the signs of the freemasonry of our art, then learn the obstructed respiration of pneumonia, the prostration of peritonitis, the tongue of gastritis, and the death-struck countenance and cold sweat of suffocative catarrh. It is there that the whistling breathing of laryngitis, the blanched membranes and sinking of ruptured liver, and the collapse of ruptured stomach, must be looked for and learned. It is there that the great practical relations of our art will be found; there and nowhere else will you discover a knowledge and a power which all the speculative medicine of the past and of the future will be impotent to afford.

Clinical study, in fact, is of paramount importance. The student should personally examine every case that enters the hospital; one case, well watched from beginning to end, is worth a dozen systematic lectures. It is the thing itself; it is seeing what you will have to recognise, and what, without seeing, you never would recognise; it is enlisting your interest, your suspense, your efforts; everything that can help to impress you in that which is teaching you; it is disease itself teaching you, instead of a teacher interpreting disease. Get, then, as much clinical experience as you possibly can, neglect anything rather than that; but remember, be less ambitious of seeing a large number of cases, than of seeing a few thoroughly; never think you know anything about cases till you have taken notes of them. The "taking" of cases suggests all sorts of questions that you would not otherwise ask; it makes you pains-taking, observant, precise. A very good plan is this, examine the case you are going to take notes of sufficiently to verify the disease; then read the subject well up; take your notes; you will then know what to look out for, what questions to ask, what symptoms are regular, what are exceptional, and every feature of the case will have a value and interest. This is an excellent way of acquiring both a literary and practical knowledge of your profession.

And now remember, that in entering on your student career, you are being put upon trial. The next few months will be the turning point of your professional life. The difficulties that beset your path are very great, and it is not by disguising or ignoring them that we shall prepare you to overcome them. The remedy is as simple and as certain as the difficulties are many and great. Stick to your lectures, your dissections, your hospital practice "with a will" and the thing is done.

Remember, then, the critical importance to you of the session before you; remember your difficulties and remember their remedy; and remember, too, that if there is one thing in this world that is perfectly certain, it is that a pupillage of diligent study is the introduction to a life of successful practice.

If you would enjoy the character of an enlightened practitioner you must become thoroughly imbued with all that is known respecting the laws that govern the *inorganic* as well as the *organic* world. It is most desirable that you acquire a knowledge of the various physical phenomena, heat, light, electricity, magnetism and chemical affinity, and the fixed laws that regulate the combining powers of living structures. Combined with these auxiliary studies, the student must strive to obtain a thorough acquaintance with the practical use of the microscope. Gentlemen, I have one more recommendation to give you. Be sober—intemperance is the rock on which too many veterinary students are wrecked; they are often led into great temptations. Let your rule be this, never partake of vinous refreshment before dinner.

Hitherto, one of the great disadvantages under which the veterinary profession have labored, has been the absence of a proper test of the professional skill of the students graduating from our veterinary schools. It cannot be denied that this has been to a great extent disadvantageous to the profession as a body. Students have become practitioners who have been lamentably deficient in a general knowledge of the first principles of the science upon which the satisfactory performance of their practical duties depend.

The heads of our College have therefore resolved to increase the severity

of this test, by which the assurances are obtained of a thorough acquaintance of each pupil with all the elementary principles, both theoretical and practical, of his profession.

This examination successfully passed, affords at once a guarantee to the public that the graduate of this institution is not only qualified to practice the veterinary art, but worthy the confidence and respect of the community at large.

If, then, as students and instructors, the friends of the New York College of Veterinary Surgeons are resolved to aid and encourage each other in this course of honest, persevering inquiry after truth, they cannot fail of raising the standard of veterinary science, of elevating the character of its members, and of making this institution what its founders originally determined it should be, equal to any in the Old World.

With regard to the views entertained by the Faculty of this College, I may be permitted to say that in this resolve they are united and determined, namely, to teach earnestly and faithfully whatever is necessary for the accomplishment of a complete medical and surgical education.

The science of veterinary medicine, as it is now beginning to be understood, is a science that has a far wider application and a far nobler mission than the limited duty of leading the sick animal back to health. In the present day, more than at any previous period in the history of our country, domestic animals are brought together in immense numbers, under a variety of conditions, powerfully and variously affecting their health. Hundreds of cattle and thousands of hogs are closely congregated at distilleries. Cows may be counted by the hundred in thousands of dairies. Armies of horses encamp and move about in enormous masses. The great problem of veterinary medicine is not so much how to cure a particular case of pneumonia or of fever, but how to prevent the outbreak of pestilence, to discover and to avert all the causes of epizootic and euzootic disease; in a word, how to preserve the health of domestic animals and thereby increase the wealth of the nation.

Regarded in this light, the veterinary profession acquires an importance which it has never yet challenged in America.

When it is considered how much the success of an army will always depend upon the health and consequent efficiency of its horses, as well as on the nutritive value of its animal food, surely the necessity of an educated corps of veterinary surgeons must be apparent to every statesman, politician and agriculturist in the land. In this relation I may be permitted to call attention to the annexed paragraph, copied from the report of James C. G. Kennedy, the able superintendent of the census for 1860. After referring to the increasing prevalence of destructive diseases in the Eastern and Western States, and the necessity of a class of well educated veterinary surgeons, says:

"This necessity has been made still more apparent by recent losses of many horses. We are of opinion that the country in the purchase and loss of horses during the insurrection, has incurred an expense already which, under other circumstances, could have been avoided to an amount greater than would have been required to maintain a national veterinary school or college on an extended scale for half a century. In truth, we are not sure that the interest on the amount lost would not permanently support such an institution."

There never was a period in the history of our country which so much required the establishment of veterinary schools as the present. Threatened from abroad with two diseases, the cholera, which is already said to be on our shores, and the rinderpest, or cattle plague of Russia, a low form of typhus, which is now making such sad havoc among cattle on the European continent, and the milch cows of England, I regret to announce the re-appearance amongst horses, at Troy, in this State, and its rapid extension along the Erie, Chenango and Black River canals, of a highly contagious disease,

5

commonly known as "black tongue." As one of the consequences of the war, we have also to contend against that most loathsome and incurable disease, glanders, the seeds of which have been sown broadcast, by the public sale of diseased army horses. Surely, then, there never was a time when the aid and judicious advice of well educated veterinarians were more needed. Sanitary commissioners and boards of health must ere long be organized or appointed by competent authority in every State, and by the general government, to protect us from the pending epidemics and epizootics. And this gives rise to the most important question, of whom or what class of persons should the board of health be composed? I answer without hesitation, of such professional gentlemen as I have the honor of being surrounded by, of our first physicians, of the best veterinarians in the country, of which there are, it is to be regretted, but very few to be found, owing, doubtless, to our want of veterinary schools; the mayor and other head executive officer of each city or town, and the police. A board composed of such material would not only be one of the surest, but the best means of protecting the public health, and the public funds. I am not an alarmist—on the contrary, while I recommend care and prudence, I would guard against excitement and fear. I regret having to refer to such unpleasant topics in an introductory lecture, I feel, however, I would be derelict in duty to the country and to my profession, and would leave myself liable to reproof from that mighty engine, the press, if I passed the subject, unpleasant though it be, over in silence.

Gentlemen, having laid before you a brief sketch or representation of the profession you have adopted, the nature of its early studies, its trials and its duties, I cannot consent to close my address without improving the opportunity of presenting a few observations on some of the most important and memorable points in the history and progress of veterinary medicine in America. Let us dwell for a moment on the present state of the profession in this city. I would not be understood to say to my professional brethren that the spirit of inquiry has departed from us, far otherwise. Yet, with humiliation, be it acknowledged, the bonds of fellowship which should have held us in unity, to support one another, and to noble emulation in the promotion of a common interest, have been constantly slackening; the spirit of discord has been wide awake, and the poison of its breath has hung upon us, until it has withered our growth and seriously damaged our reputation.

Talent and ability have been exerted, singly, frequently to meet the opposition of those who should have extended a fostering hand. That there are in New York many able practitioners, gentlemen who are fully alive to the wants of the community, and ever ready to labor for its best interests, I can cheerfully bear testimony.

I am constrained, however, to confess that too many of our ablest men have been so constantly occupied in the exercise of their professional duties as to leave little or no time to teach others, or place on record the practical improvements which their own skill has discovered.

As yet not a single original work of any value on veterinary science has been written in this country. An enterprising gentleman several years since introduced a "popular" book, published in London in 1831. Now, strange as it must appear to every reflective mind, this book, "Youatt on the Horse," written more than thirty-five years ago—a work unquestionably behind the age at the period of its first issue—is to this day quoted as authority on all matters relating to veterinary medicine and surgery, in our courts of law.

Every one at all conversant with the progress of veterinary medicine, knows, that as a science it has advanced hand in hand with the other sciences; and let us not forget that during the last quarter of a century medical science has been constantly extending its boundaries; morbid anatomy has been reconstructed; physiology remodeled; indeed, these, with the discoveries made through the aid of organic chemistry and microscopic anatomy, have wrought a complete revolution in the science and art of our profession.

Whilst veterinary science was rapidly advancing on the European continent, why was this country to be permitted to remain the only one among the civilized nations where the necessary qualification could not be obtained to enable men to assist in this great work?

Gentlemen—the task of removing the stigma has fallen upon us; it is no ordinary responsibility. Be resolved, then, to be candidates for distinction in your profession. With strong hands and willing hearts gird yourself for the contest. Toil must be endured, obstacles overcome, and reward is certain.

It is no small honor to be in the very vanguard of this onward march. It will be your high function to aid in dispersing the clouds of doubt and error which now encompass veterinary science in America. To fight its battles and uphold its standard, are your special privileges.

I trust that I have said enough to encourage my young friends to admire and love the profession which they have this day commenced. May they show their admiration and love of it by devotion to their studies, by attention to their teachers, and by respect on all occasions to the requirements of this institution. I trust, also, that I have said enough to convince the subscribers to the funds of the college, that our profession is worthy of the interest they take in it, and I hope it will encourage them to continue that liberal support which they have so willingly bestowed. The establishment of this institution, towards which your assistance has been so kindly and liberally afforded, must appear to every one who fully considers its design and object, one of the most important enterprises ever contemplated in this country.

The dependence of America for much of her wealth and prosperity, is on the health and strength of the domestic animals, while the absence of all systematic efforts to foster and advance our knowledge of the nature and laws of their growth, nutrition, health or disease, has often called forth expressions of astonishment. A respect for every department of science is especially necessary in the present times, when the material wealth and increasing welfare of nations is so closely connected with a healthy and vigorous development of the animals which furnish its food and raiment. Nothing but energetic progress in all the branches of natural science will save any State from the evils of decline.

It is wholly inconceivable that the enlightened statesmen who guide the energies of this country, will, when once their attention is aroused to this defect in our national education, withhold their aid in assisting to establish this college.

Having said thus much in reference to the subscribers, and also State encouragement, it remains for me to say what grateful thanks are due from all persons interested in the prosperity of veterinary science to our Board of Trustees for their assistance in founding this New College. This they have accomplished under the conviction that this institution is calculated to confer great and enduring benefits, not only on the horse and all other domestic animals, but on mankind.

To one gentleman, however, we owe an especial debt of gratitude, for his constant personal exertions, the devotion of his valuable time, and the unwearied employment of his influence, with the most noble and enlarged views to promote the establishment of this College. I should be deprived of the greatest pleasure I derive from my own efforts in its behalf, if I could not thus publicly acknowledge that our success, which I trust is now unquestionable, will be mainly due to John Busted.

NEW YORK COLLEGE OF VETERINARY SURGEONS.

Chartered 1857.

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The Session for 1866 '67 will commence on the first Wednesday in November, and will terminate the last of February.

FEES AND REGULATIONS.

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Lecture Fees.....	100 00
Diploma.....	25 00
Dissecting Room Fee.....	5 00
Total.....	\$135 00

The requirements for Graduation are: Twenty-one years of age, a Certificate of Study and Attendance on two full Courses of Medical Lectures, the last being in this College, a Thesis in the hand-writing of the candidate, proper testimonials of character, and a satisfactory examination by the Censors in each of the Departments of Instruction.

Two prizes will be swarded by the Faculty for the best dissected preparations.

Letters may be addressed to DR. J. BUSTEED, President of the Faculty, College of Veterinary Surgeons, 179 Lexington avenue, New York.

A. F. LIAUTARD, M. D. V. S., Registrar.

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